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QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

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SINGAPORE

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1. The end of the cold war has opened up opportunities to tackle some of the most intractable, destructive and polarizing conflicts. There is an expectation that the Security Council can at last assume "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security" as envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations. As membership of the United Nations expands, there is also a general expectation that the Security Council should become more representative of the Organization as a whole.

2. The Government of Singapore believes that the majority of Member States want a more active and effective Security Council in the new post-cold-war environment. In view of the geopolitical and economic changes, the Government of Singapore deems it appropriate that the Security Council be reformed to better reflect these changes. At the same time, the changes should enhance the effectiveness of the Council and allow it to act quickly and decisively.

3. The only previous increase in the size of the Security Council began at the eleventh session of the General Assembly in 1956. Agreement was only reached in 1963 and came into force two years later. This process, which focused only on an increase of non-permanent seats, took almost a decade to be completed. This shows the complexities involved.

4. There are a few basic problems which need to be addressed. The first is to decide the current configuration of international power and how that should be reflected in the distribution of permanent seats. This had been a difficult exercise after the Second World War, and it will be even more difficult today. Following the end of the cold war, economic, political and military powers no longer necessarily cohere in a single locus.

5. The second problem relates to the international as opposed to the supranational nature of the United Nations. The United Nations was created by sovereign States and can do nothing without their assent. At the same time, the permanent members have a more than proportionate say through their veto. These are the realities of the United Nations and in the Security Council. Any design to change the composition of the Council will have to bear these realities in mind, and not be based solely on the abstract.

6. The Government of Singapore is of the view that to progress, there is no alternative but to shape a consensus gradually through a patient process of debate and discussion in this exercise. It will entail thinking through the role of the United Nations into the next century. At this preliminary stage of the exercise, we deem it most useful to try to identify and build consensus on objective general criteria for a general review of the Security Council, especially its permanent membership.

7. In this regard, the Government of Singapore believes that the following considerations need to be borne in mind:

(a) There should be a level playing-field with regard to all present and future members of a possibly expanded Security Council;

(b) Anachronistic reference to "enemy States" in Articles 53, 77 and 107 of the Charter should be removed;

(c) Suggestions that there could be different classes of permanent members without the veto are also impractical;

(d) It is not practical or even desirable to do away with the veto. The fact that the veto has been abused does not detract from its intended function. It is a recognition of the hard reality that great Powers will not consent to put their powers at the disposal of a sheer majority for the implementation of decisions with which they do not agree. It is a safety-valve that prevents the United Nations from undertaking commitments that it lacks the power to fulfil. However, to minimize the misuse of the veto, if permanent membership is expanded, there should be at least two vetoes to block a draft resolution;

(e) Privilege must be paid for. An expanded role for the Security Council will require more resources. A permanent member should therefore carry a larger portion of the financial burden of the United Nations. Each permanent member should pay at least 9 per cent of the operating expenses of the United Nations, as well as 11 per cent of the United Nations peace-keeping operations, which are the average percentages of the permanent five's current collective percentage of these budgets. (The five permanent members of the Security Council currently pay 43.5 per cent of the regular budget of the United Nations. This averages out to an assessment of approximately 9 per cent each. They pay about 56 per cent of all peace-keeping expenses, averaging out to be about 11 per cent each.);

(f) Permanent members must have muscle, and the will and ability to wield it for the cause of the United Nations. The main mission and primary responsibility of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security. Force will be needed in pursuit of order. All permanent members should be prepared to give effect to Article 43 of the Charter and be ready to place their military forces at the disposal of the United Nations, to uphold international order;

(g) Consistent with subparagraph (c) above, permanent members must also have the requisite moral authority to assume their exclusive positions. They must have a good record of adhering to the purposes and principles contained in the Charter, and have been consistent and active in their efforts to maintain international peace and security.

8. The Government of Singapore attaches great importance to this issue. We look forward to a constructive debate among all Member States with a view to strengthening the effectiveness of the Security Council and its legitimacy in international affairs, to reinforcing Member States' confidence in its decision-making process and making it more representative of the membership of the United Nations.